

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News

(Kinderhook NY) We started off with a very dry but cold March allowing us to do some early fieldwork. In some fields the soil condition were "summer like" as the droughty conditions allowed for successful sub soiling (something we generally do in August). This early field work came to an abrupt halt with a thunderstorm, providing the soil with some much needed moisture and lessening our concern for the possibility of wind erosion. At this time there is still not much greening of our hayfields, but the garlic has popped through the mulch. We hope to seed down some oats/AC Greenfix

(Argyle NY) Daffodils are flowering and there's a hint of reddish buds on trees, but rains have kept us off the fields this week. We did turn under some o areas where the late fall crops have been. The Biotello turns under great (we hope it passes through OMRI this year for organic approval as planned). We seeded about an acre of oats for a cover crop where the winter rye was thin. It's been an interesting winter trying to figure out how much of what to plant in the high tunnels for markets, so we now have an abundance of Asian Greens and mesclun, but have been pleased with the high amount of product (kale, swiss chard, greens, spinach, mesclun, and arugula) that is possible with no heat on an extremely cold year. The disease-resistant Five-Star lettuce mix survived all winter in the center of the tunnels, even with 18 below zero (it had 3 layers of additional rowcovers). We'll be totaling data as we finish the winter markets off in 2 weeks, which have given us about 80% of the income we make in a summer market! Amazing support, even with the economy down. Spinach has been a problem since February in the tunnels as it got leaf spot (Cladosporium). We've been trying Oxidate to slow the demise, but it's been very rampant in many states from the farmers I've talked to. We are harvesting the tadorna leeks that stayed out all winter; more than half are okay. Parsnips are all dug and in the root cellar. Off and running into a new season, even though we barely slowed down due to the wonderful (?) winter markets!

REPORT FROM THE UVM PLANT DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC (Ann Hazelrigg)

Spinach problems have cropped up around the state. I have had at least 4 samples come in from overwintered spinach with various issues. Two of the samples were infected with a common fungus disease of spinach called Cladosporium leafspot. It is pretty easy to identify because it causes a lot of small brown spots all over the leaves. They can look "shot-holed" too. The fungus likes it cool and moist so I think there was either a lot of condensation in the greenhouse or it just got wet under straw or whatever the leaves were covered with over the winter. On the old stuff, it is best to clean up infected tissue so it doesn't infect any new plantings going in the greenhouse. Also, you can hot water treated seed. I suspect it will all clear up on new plantings as long as there is no condensation. For pictures of the symptoms, see <http://plant-disease.ippc.orst.edu/disease.cfm?RecordID=1011>.

The other two spinach samples did not have any fungal fruiting bodies so not sure what was causing damage but probably related to winter damage, or something abiotic.

cotyledons showing epinasty (downward pointing leaves) and a bit of curling and twisting. Plants

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